

Keeping It Together

by ImNotCallingYouALiar

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Summary: "I have a son?" "No," I hissed, "I have a son." "But-" "You were nothing more than the sperm donor. Now leave me the hell alone." Grace left La Push with a secret, five years later she's forced to return for her cousin Kim's wedding. She never wanted to go back. She never wanted to see Paul again, and she definitely did not want to be imprinted on. Prepare for drama.

1. Returning

**AN: I know, I know, you're probably thinking 'why the hell is she starting another story when she hasn't finished her other ones?' And my only answer to that isâ€¦I have no idea, and I'm sorry, but this idea has been nagging me for weeks. To all of you who read my other stories I promise that updates are on that way. I even have a new chapter of 'Reflection' already written but I'm not completely happy with it, so I will tweak it and have it up within the next few days. On another note I just handed in my last bit of coursework EVER for my university course so now I'm completely free to write for a while and hopefully update my other stories. Thanks so much for sticking with me over the years, I know that sometimes I'm not the most reliable updater. Anyway, enough of me rambling, and I hope you enjoy this new story. Here we goâ€¦!**

Tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear, I checked my face in the mirror to make sure my make-up wasn't smudged. Reaching into the new Marc Jacobs bag that Dan had given me on my birthday, I pulled out my new red lipstick. In the shop the lipstick had seemed to personify the new me; bold, classy and elegant but as I applied it to my lips it seemed too bright and garish in comparison to the drab grey tiles on the toilet walls. It made me look out of place. I missed New York already.

"Mom?" I glanced down, "I'm tired. Can we go home now?"

I wished.

"We're here for the wedding remember?" Curtis just looked at me in confusion. He had absolutely no idea what was going on. He was used to me being calm and collected. My frazzled state was probably just confusing him even more.

Hastily wiping the lipstick from my lips I smiled at myself in the mirror; a fake, practised smile, before taking Curtis's hand in mine and striding out of the toilets. My palms were unnaturally sweaty and the sound of my heels sounded too loud in the corridor leading to the Arrivals Lounge. My stomach was in knots. Once again I reached into my bag to get my phone. I just needed to hear Dan's voice, just once, or else I knew I would turn around and get on the next flight out.

"Just a second honey." Curtis hung his head and I watched with a frown as he shuffled over to a nearby seating area. He hadn't slept during the whole flight. We both needed sleep desperately.

"Dan? Hi. I-" I leant against the nearby wall for support as I spoke into my phone. Curtis looked up at the mention of Dan's name. An old couple glanced at me as they walked quickly towards the Arrivals lounge; they were probably judging how young I was.

"Grace? Is everything alright?" I could hear the familiar sounds of his office in the background. It was always busy, always loud and yet, Dan still seemed to command the attention of the room without even blinking. It was one of the things I loved about him.

"I'm fine," I really wasn't, but I didn't want him to think I was weak, "I just needed to hear your voice." I regretted the words as soon as they were out of my mouth.

There was a moment of silence. Not long enough to feel awkward, but it meant that he was thinking of something to say. My head was beginning to hurt. I needed some fresh air.

"Look Graceâ€¦I'm heading to a meeting just now," I could hear the sigh in his voice, "I could cancel but it's some very important clients and I-"

"No. No. Don't cancel," I spoke quickly, pushing myself off of the wall and walking determinedly towards Curtis, "I'm sorry I bothered you."

"You never bother me," he lied. I could hear someone laughing on his end of the line. He was probably leaning back in his cushioned chair looking out at the city while Erin, his assistant, bent over and put something on his desk giving him a perfect view of her cleavage. I felt a little sick.

"I hope your meeting goes well," He was silent, "I left some lasagne in the fridge for you."

"Enjoy your trip," He didn't even say thank you, "I will take you out for sushi when you get back, and then we can have a night in. How does that sound?"

"It sounds fabulous. I-"

"Say hello to your cousin Kiera for me."

"It's Kim," I tried to say, but he had already hung up. Glancing down at the ring on my finger, I twisted it once before taking a deep breath and reaching down to grab Curtis's hand once again.

"Are you okay Mommy?" His voice was quiet, as if he was scared that he was going to upset me. I had been a wreck for the entire plane journey, not exactly model parent behaviour. I tried to smile down at him.

"I'm just really tired," I tried to assure him, "As soon as we get to Aunt Kim's house, I will read you a story and we can sleep. How does that sound?"

"Will you stay in the same room as me?"

"You know Dan wants you to be a big boy now. Big boys sleep in their own room," I reminded him as we walked slowly towards the arrivals lounge; I was trying to delay the inevitable.

"Dan isn't here." I tried not to smirk. He was absolutely right. One night wouldn't hurt.

"Okay then," I pretended to shrug my shoulders, "We can cosy up on the single bed. You better give me lots of cuddles, and not steal all of the duvet."

Curtis just smiled. My eyes zeroed in on the missing gap in his teeth. It was so endearing. My heart clenched tightly. He was my whole world.

"Can we get some chocolate ice cream too?"

"Don't push it mister," I reached down to ruffle his curls, but my heart wasn't quite in it. I felt a little sick as I pushed open the doors leading to the Arrivals Lounge. Everything was going to be okay I told myself. It was only a brief visit.

The last time I had been in the airport, I had vowed never to return and yet I found myself once again scanning the familiar room for any sign of Kim. Everything I had achieved since last leaving La Push, had taken me further and further away from the place I had once called home. The mere thought of even spending four weeks in the place where I was born gave me the shivers. I hated La Push; I hated the people, I hated the town. It was my own personal hell.

"Grace?" I didn't even have time to prepare myself before someone barrelled into my side and pulled me into a tight hug. I felt like there was no air reaching my lungs, the room was so hot. I had almost forgotten about the lack of personal space I had always received in La Push. Almost.

"Kim?"

She hadn't changed a bit. Of course she was older, had a few more curves, but instantly my eyes noted the tiny, ripped shorts and tank top she wore, that she had always worn. Her hair was piled into a messy bun at the nape of her neck and I could barely make out the red colour of her converse beneath the layer of sand and dirt that seemed to stick to them. She hadn't changed one, single bit. The thought

depressed me slightly, and failed to give me hope for the rest of the trip.

"Grace? Is that really you?" I fought the urge to roll my eyes as she placed her hands on my shoulders and stepped back to get another look. She seemed to be drinking in every inch of the new me. The dyed blonde hair, the acrylic nails, the tight blazer and skinny jeans. She physically gasped when her eyes reached my new red, stiletto high heels. It was hard being a tiny person in New York, I had to get myself noticed somehow. I definitely wasn't the chubby, sweatshirt loving girl who had left La Push years previously, she was buried somewhere far, far away and would never be making a reappearance.

"Yeah," I took a cautious step back, "It's really me."

"You look amazing." I breathed a sigh of relief at her words. I had made myself even more perfect than normal. I wanted the new me to be the person Kim would think about when I returned home, not the old me. I wanted to prove to everyone that I had become someone, that unlike the majority of La Push, I had got out and got my own life.

"And who's this little guy?" I looked down to see Curtis hiding behind my legs. His eyes were unusually wide as he gazed up at Kim. He didn't cope well with strangers, never had. Dan said I coddled him too much, which was probably true, but I didn't trust people around him.

"This is my son," Kim's eyes snapped back up to meet mine instantly, "His name is Curtis."

"What the-" Kim began, but I interrupted her before she had the chance to curse. Placing my hand gently on Curtis's back, I pushed him forward a little.

"This is Aunt Kim," I bent down to his level so he could hear me, "She's a friend. We like her."

"We do?" Kim was silently watching our exchange. She looked as though she was ready to explode.

"We do," I assured him, "Say hi."

My feet were beginning to kill me in my new shoes, and I could feel men looking at me as they passed. I wanted to get the hell out of the airport immediately, even if that meant going back to La Push. I had been in the country less than an hour, and I already felt cheap and dirty.

"Hi." Curtis stuck his hand out the way Dan had taught him. He looked up at me for reassurance and I smiled, a genuine smile, in return. He always surprised me. Kim looked at his tiny hand and then back at me before bending down as I had done moments earlier and shaking his hand. Curtis grinned, actually grinned.

"Curtis, would you like to go for a McDonalds on the way home since we're in the city?" Curtis's face lit up like he had just won the lottery as Kim spoke. Inwardly, I groaned; another secret I would have to keep from Dan. I hoped there wouldn't be any more to add to

the list.

"Can I really get a McDonalds Mommy? Please?" He had ran back to grab onto my leg. Kim was shifting from foot to foot as if she couldn't stay still. Her eyes were narrowed.

"Okay," I lifted him up into my arms, trying not to wobble in my heels, "But it's our little secret, okay?"

"Okay."

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"A son?" Kim hissed, "Really? A _son_?"

I glanced behind me to find Curtis fast asleep in the back seat. He had a ketchup smear on his right cheek, but he had a smile on his face and as long as he was happy, I was happy.

"Kim, I really don't want to talk about this."

"Tough," she tightened her grip on the steering wheel as she stopped at a red light; "You have a son? A living, breathing son that you forgot to tell me about?"

"I didn't forget," I glanced down at my nails, "I just didn't tell you."

"We email every damn week. You talk about Dan, your job, the countless wonders of New York. But never once did you mention Curtis."

I stayed silent. The closer we got to La Push, the more anxious I became. I had made a massive mistake in coming home.

"How old is he?"

"I don't see how that matters," I murmured. Curtis shifted in his sleep. I kept my eyes on him, scared that if I blinked he would disappear before my eyes. When he had first been born I had refused to let even the nurses near me in case they took him away from me, in case they decided that I was incapable of being a mother.

"How old is he?" Kim repeated, her voice stern. She was never giving up. When I was younger I had admired her persistence, but it was beginning to get more than a little annoying as we matured.

"Four and half."

I could see her attempting to do the maths in her head. I had left La Push almost exactly five years ago to that day. Her eyes widened once again and I tried not to flinch.

"Who's the father?"

"He doesn't matter." He really didn't. I never wanted to think about him again. The mere thought of even bumping into him while I was home made me want to throw up. There was a reason I had stayed so far away for so long.

"Does he know about him?" I watched as her eyes landed on Curtis in the rear-view mirror; they softened slightly. I knew she was upset, I didn't blame her.

"No."

"Okay," Kim reached out to put her hand on my arm but reflexively I pulled away, "Do I know him?"

I focused on the road in front of us.

"I said I don't want to talk about it." I tried to make my voice strong. It was the same voice I used when I had to deliver a presentation to clients. It was the same voice that I used when I spoke to Dan. My strong voice masked the feelings that were swirling in the pit of my stomach, threatening to destroy my calm facade.

"What are you going to do when he starts asking who is Dad is?" Kim's bracelets jingled on her arm as we turned a corner. The smell of McDonalds in the car was making me feel sick. I rolled down the window. It was too damn hot.

"I said I don't want to talk about it," I repeated.

"That's not what I asked;" Kim's eyes were on Curtis once again, "What are you going to tell him?"

"He has a Dad," I muttered, "Dan is his Dad. He's everything I could ever have wished for, and he loves Curtis like he's his own." Most of the time.

The tension seemed to crackle between us.

"Shit. This is crazy," Kim breathed eventually, "You do realise this messes up all my wedding plans?"

"I can just go back to New York if it's so much of a problem?"

Kim narrowed her eyes at me, her grip on the steering wheel tightening even more.

"Don't you even think about it," she hissed, "This isn't just about you anymore Grace. This is about..." her eyes darted to the back seat as she looked for the right words, "This is about my nephew, about our family. I want everything to go back to normal."

"Nothing is normal about our family."

"That is so not true."

I just rolled my eyes. The passing scenery was getting more recognisable by the second. My hands itched to grab Curtis and make my escape before it was too late, before everything and everyone I had tried so hard to forget reappeared.

"We make fajitas on a Friday night," Kim tried, "And we fight, and laugh. Just like any other normal family."

I managed a weak laugh at Kim's attempt to make me feel better. Once

upon a time we had been joined at the hip, she would have known what I was thinking with just a single glance. At times, especially in New York, I had missed her company, her guidance. However, then I forced myself to remember that it was the people closest to you that hurt you; whether they meant to or not. Although Kim and I had kept in contact over the years, there had been a line that we had never crossed - we never spoke of why I left. Emailing was easier, but sitting beside her in her car, watching as her eyes continued to flit between me and Curtis, I worried that the walls I had tried so hard to build around me would come crumbling down if she probed them too hard.

And I was terrified.

"We're almost there."

My eyes clamped shut without warning. I didn't want to see the town square, or the park, or my favourite bookshop. I especially didn't want to see the ice cream shop, or his house. It still hurt so damn much.

"I know," I muttered keeping my eyes closed.

The truck continued to bump along the old roads. I never thought I would say it; but I missed the subway - I missed the impersonal nature, how nobody felt the need to make awkward small talk, and nobody knew anyone. New York was everything that La Push wasn't, and that was why I had run there in the first place. It was easy to go unnoticed in a big city, and it was impossible to go unnoticed in La Push.

I wiped my sweaty palms on my new skinny jeans. My eyes stayed firmly shut, but I could feel Kim's burning stare on the side of my head. I wished she would pay more attention to the windy roads, than my emotional state. Her driving had always been somewhat out of control. I remembered briefly when she had first gotten her license and driven straight into Uncle Matt's garage. He had made her mow his lawn for the next year, and paint his new fence. It had been hilarious.

"Mommy? Are you alright?"

My eyes immediately snapped open at the sound of Curtis's tiny voice. He was too quiet; it worried me. Dan said I needed to organise playdates with other boys; but they all seemed so much bigger than Curtis. He was just so small and soft in my eyes, and I was scared they would hurt him. I couldn't bare it if anyone hurt Curtis. I had been hurt enough for the both of us.

"I'm great honey," I plastered a bright smile on my face as I turned to face him, "Are you okay?"

"I need to go the bathroom," Curtis voice quietened even more as he looked between Kim and I.

"Aunt Kim's house is just round the corner. Can you wait until then?"

"Yes Mommy," he smiled. I reached for his hand and gave it a tight squeeze, focusing on his face rather than the car's immediate

surroundings. I had to be strong for him. Everything I did was for him.

"We're going to have so much fun," Kim's excitement sounded too forced, "And I made brownies before I came to pick you up to welcome you and your Mom." My stomach growled at the thought of Kim's brownies, but I made myself turn to glare at her.

"Would you stop trying to feed him sugar?" I muttered under my breath.

"A little sugar never harmed anyone."

"Well, it certainly harmed you."

Kim just childishly stuck her tongue out at me and stepped on the gas. Curtis shot me a questioning look, which I ignored. Things were just about to get a lot more complicated, and I was definitely not ready for it.

Thoughts?

2. Old Faces

My Aunt May's house was exactly the way I remembered it - the same red painted front door, the same pictures in the hallway, the same wobbly chairs around the dining table. I was sitting on one of the wobbly chairs watching as Curtis demolished his second brownie. My hand itched to grab the plate and hide it away. Kim just smirked at me from across the table as she took gulp after gulp out of her large wine glass. Mine lay untouched in front of me.

"He has your eyes."

My Aunt's gaze hadn't left Curtis since we had entered the house. She had commented on his nose, his hair and now she was on to his eyes. I just kept the fake smile plastered on my face, and continued to watch Curtis along with everyone else. At least his unannounced arrival had taken all the heat away from me. I was grateful.

"Are you alright sweetie? Do you want another brownie? Milk? Anything?"

Curtis looked to me for approval, he had chocolate crumbs all over his shirt and a huge grin on his face. Briefly, I recalled the night that Dan had come home to find Curtis and I making brownies. He had not been happy.

"No, no," I gave Curtis a stern look as he reached for another brownie, "I think we've had enough fatty food today, don't you Curtis?"

"Yes Mommy." I hated to be the one responsible for wiping the smile from his face; but it was necessary. He was a handful when he was hyper.

"Surely he can have one more-"

"No," I interrupted, "Why don't you go get yourself a glass of water

honey? And then we can get you into your pj's?"

"Yes Mommy." He jumped down from the wobbly chair and pushed it back under the table before walking through to the kitchen. I released the breath I hadn't even known I'd been holding.

"I can go help him-"

"No," I finally took a sip of my wine, "He can get it himself. He's a big boy."

"He's only four and a half-"

"What the fuck happened to you?" Kim interrupted her Mom with a drunken slur. I had forgotten how much of a lightweight she was. It was embarrassing.

"I don't get what you mean?"

"No sugar. High heels. Fancy handbags. Letting your four year old fend for himself-"

"Are you implying that I can't look after my own child?"

"No, but-"

"..because that boy is my whole world."

"A whole world that you didn't even think to share with your family."

"My family is Curtis," I snapped, "And Dan."

"Dan who won't even be gracing us with his presence?" My Aunt reached out to put a calming hand on Kim's arm, but she continued to stare me down.

"He's really sorry. He's a busy man."

"Too busy to accompany his fiancée on a trip to see the family she has avoided for almost five years?"

I pushed away from the table. My hands shook as I placed them on the back of my chair. Curtis looked around in confusion as he re-entered the room clutching his glass of water in his hand. He wasn't used to raised voices, or adults who drank a lot. Without a word I walked towards him and scooped him into my arms. He put his free arm around my neck. He always seemed to be comforting me, when it was me who should be comforting him.

"You don't know what you're talking about," I spoke quietly, "Dan is a brilliant fiancée, a brilliant step-father and everything I have ever wanted."

"We love Dan," Curtis echoed almost robotically. I gave him a tight squeeze of thanks.

"Grace I - "

"I'll speak to you in the morning when you don't have a bottle of

wine in your body."

"Night Aunt May," I added before turning swiftly and exiting the room. Only when the door slammed closed behind me did I pause for a moment and lean against the wall in the hallway. My heart was hammering wildly in my chest. I wasn't used to being around people for a long period of time. I wasn't used to being questioned or making small talk. I lived a pretty isolated life in New York, and that was the way I liked it.

All I wanted in that moment was to sink to the floor in the hallway and cry. Instead, I pulled Curtis closer to my chest and inhaled his familiar scent. He was familiar.

"Mommy, do you-"

His voice stopped abruptly as the front door slammed open. Without any conscious thought I placed Curtis on the floor behind me and turned to face the door, my fists raised. I hadn't thrown a punch in years, but La Push seemed to bring out the old fighting spirit that used to be so rife within me.

I lost the ability to think clearly as two men staggered into the house. My eyes narrowed in on the one familiar face.

"Gracey?"

His voice washed right over me. He looked so different; he was huge, and had muscles that he had never had before. He had dark circles under his eyes and had gotten rid of his long hair. What the hell had happened to him?

"Gracey?" He repeated, his voice disbelieving, "Is that really you?"

"I thought you were in Chicago?" I had never heard my voice sounding so small.

"Things didn't work out so well there," he shrugged his shoulders and went to take a step towards me, his arms out as if to grab me in a tight hug.

"No Embry," I shook my head and took a step back, almost stepping on Curtis in the process, "You're not supposed to be here. She promised you wouldn't be here."

I stiffened as the door behind me opened. Kim muttered 'shit' under her breath, and I flinched away as she reached out to touch my shoulder. She had lied to me. I couldn't stand liars; she knew that.

"What the fuck Kim?" I whirled on her, my controlled act slowly crumbling, "You promised he wouldn't be here."

"He's your brother Grace. He's also one of my fiancÃ©e's best friends, he had to come to the wedding."

"You fucking lied to me!"

"You wouldn't have come to the wedding otherwise, it was enough of a

struggle getting you here as it was."

"I shouldn't have come here," I shook my head from side to side, "This was a gigantic mistake. I don't even know why I agreed to this."

"Grace-"

"You know what he did," I hissed, "You're the only one who knows what he did."

"He's still your brother. You have to forgive him at some point, it was an accident."

"Gracey; that was five years ago."

"Don't you dare talk to me! You're supposed to be in Chicago! You're supposed to be-"

"Mommy?" Curtis's voice was frantic, "Mommy? I'm scared."

Shit. I was scaring him; the one thing I always strived not to do. I had been in La Push all of five minutes and everything was already going to shit.

"It's going to be fine," I murmured as I stroked Curtis's hair. Everything was going to be fine. I was going to go to bed, and then I was getting the hell out of La Push with Curtis before anybody else woke up in the morning. It had been the worst decision ever to return to Crazytown.

"What did he call you?" Embry's eyes were flickering between Curtis and I. He seemed to be noticing the same things that my Aunt May had been mentioning earlier - the same eyes, the same crooked nose, the same determination. I ignored Embry as I continued to mumble soothing words in Curtis's ear. He must have been so damn tired.

"Is he your son?"

Ignoring Embry my eyes registered Jared's presence in the hallway. It still baffled me that he had noticed Kim when I left town; he had been nothing but a fantasy of hers, and I still wondered why he had drastically changed his mind. Jared Thail was not the type of person who hung around with Kim and me. I had despised Jared Thail for a long time. Kim had promised me that he had changed, but she had promised a lot of things that I was beginning to discover were complete bullshit.

"I'm an uncle?" Embry was still talking, clearly he didn't register that I had no desire to speak to him, ever.

"No," I hissed, "You lost the right to be an uncle a long time ago."

"Gracey, I-"

"And you don't get to call me that anymore either."

Pushing my way past Embry I started up the stairs, Curtis silently watching everyone from my arms. I ignored the countless knocks on my

bedroom door in the hour that followed and the whispering on the landing. I had ignored them all for five years, and I would continue to do so. I had been naive to think that they were all still part of my family, that I could forgive and forget.

I didn't let go of Curtis that night until he was fast asleep. Even then, I did not take my eyes off him as I changed into my pj's and tried to forget everything that had just transpired. My hand shook as I reached for my cell phone to call Dan.

It went straight to voicemail.

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There was a moment when I woke up that I forgot where I was. Keeping my eyes closed I stretched my arms above my head and let out a contented sigh. I couldn't remember the last time I had woken up naturally without the shrill sound of the alarm clock squealing in my ear. Turning onto my side I reached out expecting to encounter Dan's solid frame beside me. Instead, I encountered only cold air. Only when I opened my eyes did reality come crashing down.

Fuck.

Sitting up I glanced frantically around the room for any sign of Curtis. The clock beside the bed read midday; so much for my plan of getting up early and escaping La Push before anyone else woke up. I cursed under my breath as my feet encountered the cold, wooden floor. I had to find Curtis. I couldn't believe he hadn't woken me up before leaving the room. He knew better than to talk to strangers.

My footsteps echoed throughout the entire house as I ran down the stairs. I paused briefly when I got to the bottom composing myself, and running a hand through my bed head before storming into the kitchen.

"Curtis?"

Kim and Embry looked up as I entered the kitchen. Kim looked like hell; her hair was wild, and her eye make-up smudged. It served her right after drinking so much wine. While I seemed to have grown up, she seemed to be stuck in the past. It was pathetic.

"Nice pyjamas Gracey," I ignored Embry's sarcastic comment as I heard a scream. Bypassing the table, I headed straight for the back door. Kim pushed away from the table and grabbed my hand before I could place it on the door handle.

"Let me go," I hissed. It was a bad idea to get in the way of me and Curtis.

"Just look." I struggled against her as she dragged me to the kitchen window. I could hear Embry crunching infuriatingly loudly on his cereal in the background.

"Just look," Kim repeated.

Curtis wasn't screaming in fear; he was laughing uncontrollably. It was a sound so rare that I hardly recognised it. The thought made me sad. Jared was chasing him around the garden with a wide grin on his

face. Dan never played with Curtis like that, at least not when I was around.

"He loves children," Kim smiled watching as her fianc e picked Curtis up and spun him around. Normally Curtis was so wary of strangers, but he seemed so at home in my Aunt May's house. I couldn't decide whether that made me feel good, or whether it made me sick to the pit of my stomach. We couldn't stay long. We had to go back to New York, to our own lives. Our completely normal lives.

"Maybe he has changed  " My voice trailed off, realising I had spoken aloud.

"Yes," Kim sighed as she pressed a coffee cup into my hands, "Jared is amazing. He looks after me Grace, and I love him. The only weird thing about him is that he doesn't like chocolate."

"Who the fuck doesn't like chocolate?" Embry muttered from behind us, "What a weirdo."

"I'm so sorry about last night," Kim spoke quietly as she continued to watch Curtis through the window. Her eyes were glassy, and faraway.

"You lied to me about Embry." My voice was harsh.

"You lied to me about Curtis."

I just looked at her, while Embry let out a snort of laughter.

"You both haven't changed a bit," he laughed.

Ignoring him I perched up on the counter top cradling my mug of coffee, my eyes still on Curtis. I was not going to talk to Embry, I would not break.

"I've just been under a lot of stress with the wedding lately, and seeing you for the first time in years. It's all just so overwhelming," Kim was always creating excuses. At least I had the decency just to admit that I had lied, it had been what was best for me and Curtis at the time.

"We can leave if it's too overwhelming for you."

"Stop offering to leave, that would only make things worse. I want you here. You are my best friend."

"Was," I corrected her.

"No," she forced me to look at her, "You will always be my best friend, whether you want to be or not."

"Then you need to start telling me if I'm going to run into any blasts from the past," I winced as I thought of the one person who I couldn't see. I was going to have to tell her about Curtis's father at some point, she would have to help me avoid him.

"I promise," Kim blinked the tears from her eyes as she spoke, "It won't happen again."

"That goes for you too," I whirled on Embry. He just smirked and put another spoonful of cereal in his mouth. The chair creaked under his weight as he moved restlessly about. I still despised him.

"Maybe you should just accept your past, instead of running away from it."

I shot him a warning look as the back door swung open.

"Mommy," Curtis grinned as he flung himself into my arms. I kissed him lightly on the forehead as he wriggled about. I couldn't remember ever seeing him so happy.

"Did you see me and Uncle Jared pretending to be monkeys? Did you?"
_Uncle? _My stomach twisted at the word. He was going to get too attached to La Push, to the people I had tried so hard to forget.

"Yes, yes I did. Did you have fun?"

"It was so good Mommy. And Aunt Kim said I could have ice cream after dinner tonight if I'm a good boy."

"Did she now?" I turned to glare at her, but she was studiously avoiding my gaze. I watched as Jared snuck up behind her and wrapped his arms tightly around her waist. She giggled as he placed tiny kisses on her neck. My heart squeezed tightly in my chest and I forced myself to look away.

"Yes," Curtis nodded his head in answer to my question, "She said she was entitled to spoil me as I am her only nephew."

"Piece of advice buddy," I whispered in his ear, "Don't ever listen to what Aunt Kim says."

"So no ice cream?" The smile that had been on his face only moments before had been replaced with a look of sadness. I forced myself to keep a straight face.

"I suppose this one time we can make an exception."

"I love you Mommy." I let out a laugh as he tightened his hold on my neck and placed a kiss on my cheek. I would never get tired of Curtis telling me that he loved me. At least someone did.

"I've got a better idea. Why don't we go to the Diner for an all day breakfast? You can have pancakes," Jared was grinning widely, and Kim looped her arm through her fianc es as they shot me questioning looks.

"Did I hear pancakes mentioned?"

Ignoring Embry, I shook my head adamantly. My plan was to not leave the safety of my Aunt's house except for the wedding. That had been the deal.

"I'm not hungry." At that exact moment, my stomach rumbled and revealed my lie.

"Sure you're not," Kim laughed.

"You need to lighten up cuz," she continued, "Besides, you love the Diner."

"Loved," I corrected.

"God," Embry muttered, "When did you become such a party pooper?"

"When did you become such a jackass?" I hissed, covering Curtis's ears with my hands.

"But Mommy," he struggled in my arms, "Aunt Kim says there's a beach near the Diner, and you promised we would go to a beach one day."

"I meant the one at home honey," I sighed.

"Why can't we go to this one?" He looked so damn sad, "Isn't it the beach you used to play on when you were as little as me?"

I glared at Kim, she had been telling him a lot while I slept. In future, I would have to make sure he didn't leave the bedroom without me.

"Okay, okay," He always managed to win me over, "Just let Mommy put on some clothes and then we'll go get some breakfast. How does that sound?"

"And then we can go to the beach?" Curtis was grinning so wide, I was afraid his face might actually break.

"Hmmm, I suppose so."

"You're the best Mommy," he placed another kiss on my cheek. I savoured the moment, hugging him to my chest.

"I swear if there are any more unexpected surprises at the Diner. I'm out of here before the day is over," I hissed at Kim before making my way back upstairs.

I don't think my heart could have taken any more surprises.

_Thoughts? _

**AN: Okay, hey guys, thank you all so much for the positive reactions so far. So as you've probably gathered, for the purpose of this story Kim and Embry are cousins. And Embry is Grace's brother which means Kim and Grace are also cousins. I know this is not accurate, but I hope you guys will get on board with this. Love you all, speak soon x**

End
file.